

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE  
WASHINGTON STATE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION  
July 19 & 20, 2005**

The regular meeting of the Washington State Transportation Commission was called to order at 1 P.M., on July 19, 2005 at Port of Vancouver, Commission Board Room, 3103 Lower River Road, Vancouver, Washington.

Commissioners present at the meeting were: Chair O'Neal, Ed Barnes, Karen Bonaudi, Bob Distler, Dick Ford, Elmira Forner, and Dale Stedman.

**WELCOME**

Chair O'Neal welcomed presenters and guests.

Deb Wallace, State Representative for the 17<sup>th</sup> District and Vice Chair of the House Transportation Committee, welcomed the Commission to Vancouver. She shared that Clark County is located in a very strategic location as a result of being on the edge of the Columbia River and the I-5 corridor. Most importantly is that Clark County is known for its partnership planning in delivering transportation. She noted that the global economy is expected to grow by 80 percent over the next 20 years. What this means to Washington and the region is that there will be competition from other countries that will affect the economy of the state. These issues need to be addressed in order to stay competitive in the global market. She explained that there is a need for cutting edge tolling facilities in order to pay for the future, especially bridges such as the Columbia River Crossing. The Legislature needs to be made aware of any policy changes that may need to happen in order to implement tolling. Also rail capacity is critical to the people of state and the benefits of this investment should be explained to the public. Furthermore freight and marine cargo needs to reach the ports, therefore it is important to provide better access in order to move freight in and out efficiently. It's important that the public be informed, have all of the facts and understand the ramifications of not making the investments.

Mayor Royce Pollard, City of Vancouver, welcomed the Commission to Vancouver. He shared that he is very pleased to have Commissioner Barnes representing the Southwest Region. There is a tremendous amount of transportation related activity in the region that includes the Columbia River Crossing. The crossing is a nationally recognized chokepoint, with two of the remaining three lift bridges on the interstate system. He encouraged the Commission to keep the local business community involved in the crossing study. There will be continued growth in the region, and it is important to move forward in partnerships with the state and federal government.

**PORT OF VANCOUVER WELCOME AND SUMMARY OF CRITICAL  
TRANSPORTATION ISSUES**

Larry Paulson, Executive Director, Port of Vancouver, shared that the port will be ready for the future. Washington is a trade dependent state with freight volumes that will grow rapidly.

It is urgent that investments be made in freight-related infrastructure in order for the economy to grow. There is significant pressure on the rail network, which impedes Washington port's ability to efficiently handle growing volumes of trade traffic. Chokepoints on primary main line corridor are unable to handle the total volume of train traffic under current operating and routing parameters. There is also increased congestion at port operations that results in inefficiency and conflicts with growing volumes of other main line passenger and freight trains. Rail constraints create an increase in transportation costs, decrease reliability, divert cargo and stress the national transportation system. There is a loss of revenue, which ultimately results in the loss of jobs. In the long term there needs to be an expansive operating and capital investment initiative to ensure that ports are able to realize their growth potential. In conclusion there must be an increase in investment in freight road and rail infrastructure to take advantage of market opportunities.

### **LOCAL TRANSPORTATION ISSUES IN VANCOUVER**

Dean Lookingbill, Transportation Director, Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council, thanked the Commission for coming to the southwest region. He expressed special gratitude to Commissioner Barnes for his participation in the community as well as the Commission.

He shared that three counties (Skamania, Klickitat and Clark) make up the RTPPO. A priority for the RTPPO is safety issues and transportation system improvements to support economic development. He shared an overview of regional issues and major development projects.

Lynn Griffith, Executive Director, C-TRAN, presented the proposed Service Presentation Plan developed for C-TRAN's new transit district. She noted that since the loss of state matching funds in 2000 clear action has been taken to close the funding gap. This action resulted in a 40 percent revenue loss to C-TRAN. As the Board considers a new service and funding plan that preserves transit service levels and balances C-TRAN's budget. C-TRAN has successfully lowered cost, improved system efficiencies and improved service effectiveness. The Board has authorized the development of a final service and implementation plan that preserves current transit service levels and restores innovative service to areas that lost service in 2000, and requested that a proposition be placed on the ballot which authorizes the imposition of up to 0.2 percent of the sales and use tax available to the Clark County Public Transportation Benefit Area (C-TRAN) for the purpose of funding a service preservation plan.

### **UPDATE ON ETHICS RULES IMPACTING COMMISSIONERS**

Steve Dietrich, Assistant Attorney General, Transportation and Public Construction Division, Office of the Attorney General, provided an overview of statutes that affect public officials specifically those that restrict the use of public funds and property to support or oppose ballot measures. State officers are prohibited from using state facilities to promote or oppose a candidate or ballot measure. He explained that this includes the individual's time (if they are being compensated), a state facility, telephones, mail systems ect. Commissioners can make statements or present facts related to ordinary duties. For the most part, the statutory language is very clear.

The statute does not restrict the right of any individual to express his/her own personal views concerning, supporting, or opposing any candidate or ballot proposition, if such expression does not involve position or use of facilities of a public office or agency (please refer to agenda item #4 handout for more detail).

### **ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT**

Reema Griffith, Commission Administrator, requested Commissioner input regarding team meetings.

Chair O'Neal designated member assignment for the WTP, Rail and Toll teams.

Ms. Griffith provided an update regarding the status of the Tolling Study Request For Proposal. She noted that ten letters of intent have been received. The tolling subcommittee will meet with WSDOT staff to review and score the proposals. The next step will be to interview the finalist based on score results.

She moved on to share that the Transportation Performance Audit Board has been transferred to the Commission per legislation this session. There has been discussion regarding TPAB remaining an independent entity, although the TPAB staff has been transferred to the Commission, but will continue to support TPAB. The option of the Commission and TPAB co-locating together is being evaluated.

Commissioners discussed the relationship between the Commission and the Department. It was noted that perhaps the Commission should discuss concerns with key legislators.

Chair O'Neal appointed Commissioners Stedman, Forner and Barnes to serve as the committee that will make recommendation of the appointment of the Commission vice chair.

Commissioner Barnes requested that departing Commissioner Maher be presented with a resolution honoring her service as a member.

***It was moved by Commissioner Ford and seconded by Commissioner Distler to prepare and approve a resolution thanking Commissioner Maher for her service. The motion passed unanimously.***

### **SECRETARY'S REPORT**

Due to a gap in the tape recording this portion of the briefing was not audible.

### **PUBLIC AND LEGISLATOR COMMENT PERIOD**

Paul Locke, citizen, shared his concerns regarding state and federal matching funds for local projects.

Sharon Nasett, citizen, expressed her opinion regarding congestion on I-5 in the Vancouver area and the proposed new bridge at the Columbia River Crossing.

## **TRANSPORTATION INNOVATIVE PARTNERSHIPS (TIP)**

Paula Hammond, Chief of Staff, WSDOT, briefly explained the difference between the current TIPP from the past public/private initiative.

Jeff Doyle, Director, Transportation Innovative Partnerships, shared that today's discussion will identify deadlines, milestones and determine a critical path. The next steps are to begin drafting a work plan to develop rules for TIP. Ultimately there will be a startup phase that will include program development and then move forward to a project development phase. RCW 47.46 dictates the pace of work and deadlines for final rule submission to the Legislature. He provided an overview of upcoming work plan timelines.

The Commission meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m., on July 20, 2005.

### **WASHINGTON STATE TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION**

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DAN O'NEAL, Chair

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DICK FORD, Vice-Chair

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EDWARD BARNES, Member

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No longer a member  
KAREN BONAUDI, Member

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ELMIRA FORNER, Member

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ROBERT S. DISTLER, Member

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DALE STEDMAN, Member

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DOUGLAS MACDONALD, Ex-Officio Member  
Secretary of Transportation

ATTEST:

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REEMA GRIFFITH, Administrator

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DATE OF APPROVAL